

NEW JERSEY URBAN LEAGUE REPORT
for September, 1946

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

National Urban League Conference Three members of the League Staff (executive, industrial and neighborhood secretaries) attended the National Urban League conference held in St. Louis, Missouri during the

last week in September. The first national gathering since 1944, the conference reached a high point in the number of total delegates, the various communities represented, number of staff members in attendance, number of board members in attendance. There was keen and sustained interest in the problems discussed. Although we shall not attempt to give a detailed report here, we do feel that some of the highlights should be presented.

The theme "American Teamwork Works" was presented by Lester Oranger, National Executive Secretary, as a challenge as well as an expression of faith. Citing the fact that fifty-six affiliated Urban League branches were in cities representing one-half the urban Negro population, he declared that results of the League program was not due to any special genius of any few staff members but to careful organization, consistent planning and close teamwork on the part of many - board members, staff members, committee members, cooperating organizations, etc. Among the important topics discussed were: housing; veterans; employment in the white-collar, public utilities and manufacturing fields; race relations. Special attention was given to the techniques and methods used to "get the job done," designed to improve the staff members' skill. Resolutions adopted by the conference urged: world peace based on brotherhood of all; permanent FEPC legislation on federal, state and local levels; passage of Wagner-Elender-Taft housing bill; steps to be taken by the Veterans Administration to improve and expand services to colored veterans, who are seriously handicapped with respect to employment, on-the-job training, apprenticeship, educational and vocational training facilities and social services. Other resolutions endorsed the southern organizing drives of organized labor; commended the order eliminating segregation in Washington D.C. USES offices; deplored the return of USES to state control as authorized by Congress and recommended that the Secretary of Labor use the power vested in him by law to withhold financial aid from state units which practice discrimination.

The executive secretary served on the Findings and Resolution Committee; and has secured copies of all speeches delivered at the conference. These are available for any who wish to see them.

Housing During the month we again urged the Newark Housing Authority to continue to follow the policy of basing selection of tenants on greatest need and to permit veterans who are found to be in greatest need to occupy apartments or temporary houses as they become available.

The Mayor was contacted regarding a report that Negroes were to be excluded from certain parcels of land secured for erection of temporary houses for veterans. We were assured by the Mayor that there was no intent to exclude Negro veterans and that he would oppose any such move.

One address was given by the executive secretary at a youth conference sponsored by the Court Street YMCA. He was active in re-organization work of the Inter-Group Action Council, and gave interviews to eleven persons needing assistance with personal problems and seeking information on conditions in the "Negro Community". One week of his vacation was taken during September.

A staff change involving the replacement of the building superintendent and the house matron has become necessary. The change will be made November 15th.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

Bus Drivers Culminating eighteen months of negotiation between the Industrial Relations Secretary and officials of the Public Service Coordinate Transport Company, two Negro employees were upgraded from jobs of mechanic and garageman to those of regular bus drivers, marking the first time that Negroes have been employed in such capacity by the company, which controls an estimated ninety-percent of the bus transportation in the state. Several months ago when it appeared as though a civic group would disrupt negotiations by attempting to exert pressure on PSCTC, the Industrial Secretary prevailed upon the group to abide time. With its cooperation he was able to continue until success was attained. Various newspaper reports giving credit to the civic group and other individuals are inaccurate, since the League representative was the only person in direct contact with PSCTC.

National Urban League Conference The Industrial Relations Secretary spoke on "The Negro Worker In The White-Collar Field" at the National Conference. He emphasized the fact that "regardless of the quantitative gains made during the war, the white collar field harbors a qualitative lag in the employment of Negroes". Favorable comments was given the speech by "St. Louis Globe-Democrat" and the Industrial Relations Secretary was interviewed by a reporter of the "New York Times."

Findings of the conference that, generally, record keeping in League branches is not up to the best standards of social work, served to emphasize the need for more clerical help.

Other Activities Acting on information received by the Executive Secretary the Industrial Relations Secretary investigated activities of some Office of Dependency Benefit supervisors who were giving discriminatory counsel to Negro employees, intended to discourage them from going to St. Louis when the agency moves there. Subsequently, new orders were distributed emphasizing that all workers regardless of race, creed, or color should decide for themselves whether they want to go to St. Louis and that all should expect equal consideration. The secretary continued work with the Labor Committee to Combat Intolerance. Through this committee the Urban League, the Jewish Community Relations Committee, the American Labor Education Service, the state AFofL and state CIO are arranging for educational material to be presented to workers in as many plants and union locals as can be reached. The Industrial Relations Secretary was interviewed by a Newark Evening News reporter on the subject of household employment and by a Newark Sunday Call reporter on the subject of discrimination against Negro veterans. The Industrial Relations and Executive Secretaries attended a meeting at the Newark Regional Office of the National Housing Agency where problems of labor shortage affecting the housing program were discussed. The League representatives advised on more effective methods of utilizing Negro labor.

Job referrals for the month were eighty-six (seventy males and sixteen females). Significant placements included stenographers and a secretary in important downtown offices, two professional placements and one veteran placement as an apprentice-tailor. Twelve persons were given vocational guidance and three were counselled about present work.

NEIGHBORHOOD DEPARTMENT

Neighborhood Groups Having laid the ground-work in the spring and summer, the Neighborhood Secretary brought two new neighborhood groups to the point of organization during the month of September. These groups, known as the Waverly Avenue Men's group and the Charlton Street Home and School group, will launch their programs during the next month.

One meeting of the Fuld Neighborhood Group and two meetings of the Royal Leaders were held. The activities of the latter group included crocheting, knitting, darning and discussion of the fall programs. Because the acute shortage of sugar made it impossible to carry out the group canning project, individual canning programs were carried out by members.

During the month the secretary was engaged in consumer advisory activities, worked with the Child Hygiene Division of the City Health Department and with the Budget Committee of the Family and General Welfare Division of the Welfare Council.

National Conference Of particular interest to this department were the sessions on Community Organization. Although there is wide variance in the types of neighborhood programs carried on by the Urban League branches, they have the same general purpose. Where the programs have been fully developed, the department is known as the Community Organization Department. The following goals were outlined:

1. To build a better citizenship
2. To promote social service otherwise unprovided.
3. To promote a better social spirit in the community by helping citizens become better acquainted and thereby strengthening neighborhood ties.

4. To provide helpful educational features for groups
5. To keep informed as to the conditions under which Negroes live, work and play.
6. To aid in carrying out the program of the League

A Community Organization Council was established, with Reginald Johnson representing the group in the National Office. The Neighborhood Secretary was appointed to its Constitution Committee.

Personal Service The Secretary worked on eleven cases involving personal service. Of two which were referred by Traveler's Aid, one was referred to the Industrial Relations Department where a job was secured; he was then sent to the Salvation Army for clothing. The other was referred to the Industrial Department for employment. A boarding school was selected for a client sent to us by the Juvenile Clinic; another client was referred to a hospital; another to the Friendly Neighborhood House for nursery service; another was aided in securing beauty culture license; and another was assisted by clarifying a misunderstanding she had with the Department of Welfare. The other cases were of miscellaneous nature. Two home visits were made.

Respectfully submitted,

George H. Robinson

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Executive Secretary